

CHAPTER XIII

JOINS THE CONSERVATIVES

1834-1835

The last letters prepare us for another period of mainly political activity. Nearly two years had now elapsed since the second Wycombe election, and during that interval, while the politician slumbered in Disraeli, public events had been moving swiftly on. 'There is nothing more remarkable,' he writes in *Endymion*?⁴ than the sudden break-up of the Whig party after their successful revolution of 1832. It is one of the most striking instances on record of all the elements of political power being useless without a commanding individual will.' Durham, whose place was at the extreme left of the party, had abandoned the Grey Ministry in March, 1833; Stanley and Graham at the extreme right had followed in May, 1834; and Lord Grey himself retired a couple of months later. Melbourne succeeded as Prime Minister; but in November his position was weakened by the succession of Lord Althorp to the peerage, and his consequent withdrawal from the House of Commons, of which he had been leader, and King William IV. seized the opportunity of dismissing his Ministers to make way for Peel and Wellington. During the crisis that followed the retirement of Stanley and

¹ Ch. 14.

